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ABSTRACT

A growing international controversy exists between the West on one hand and the Third World, Marxist states, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the other focusing on the concepts of "free flow of information" and "Western communication imperialism," and on ethical issues relating to these concepts. A basic difference exists between how these concepts are understood: the West understands "free flow of information" as lack of government controls, while the Third World and others stress a "balanced and unbiased" flow to and from the Third World. A balanced flow of news, however, is an unrealistic expectation, and internal restrictions on news in the Third World are an important explanation for a paucity of serious and vital news flowing to the West. Exception can also be taken to the popular indictment of the West as engaging in "communication imperialism": Western communication agencies offer but do not force their products on the Third World. The ethics of communication practices are closely tied to political philosophy and basic social theory. In the West it is believed that it is ethical to use communications systems for profit and public service, whereas in Communist and Third World nations it is held that communications systems should be highly controlled to develop their societies along collectivistic lines.
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'THE FREE FLOW OF NEWS' AND
'WESTERN COMMUNICATION IMPERIALISM':
DIVERGENT VIEWS ON ETHICS
IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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The extremely long and somewhat tedious title of these remarks I think rather adequately reflects the complexity--and the magnitude--of a growing international controversy. And this controversy in my opinion is not simply one of rhetorical differences among national communicators, but one which goes much deeper into the very core of ideological warfare that rages primarily between the First and Second Worlds.

Most of you are familiar with the struggle, largely carried on in recent years within the forums of UNESCO and distributed throughout the world in Third World packages. Key terms in the dialogue--or better, in the adversarial philippic--have been these: free flow of information and Western communication imperialism. These two terms--which have almost become slogans--have spawned many others, but I shall concentrate on these two today.

Certainly we must admit that these are controversial terms and relate very closely to the theme of this conference. For few would doubt that the way information flows among nations and cultures, coupled with the motives behind such flow, strikes at the very heart of "ethics, responsibilities and standards in intercultural/international communication."

Of all the concepts I could think of which were relevant to our concerns at this conference, I could think of no two more important--or controversial--than these two I shall focus on today. Controversies, as you well know, seldom find satisfactory solutions; certainly they often lead to more muddle than enlightenment. I can only hope that these remarks will not complicate these already muddled issues. Where protagonists differ strongly on issues--and they certainly do on these two--the need for rational discussion is all the greater. But the opposite most often happens--especially in multi-national and multi-cultural controversies, where the additional spectre of political ideology rears its emotional head. And that is exactly what has happened in this fiery rhetorical shooting match raging mainly between the Marxist world and the Capitalist world, with the so-called "non-aligned," "developing,"¹ or Third World countries adding their shrill voices usually in concert with the Marxist World. In fact, it may be said that the Third World is--at least in this particular battle--doing the actual fighting for the Marxist powers, having been provided the ideological bullets, of course, by them.

Lest you think that I too quickly see Marxists standing behind the Third World combatants in this international fray, let me assure you that I have made valiant efforts to convince myself to the contrary. But, especially since 1976 as I have

carefully analyzed the multifarious pronouncements^e of Third World leaders, UNESCO documents and draft resolutions, and have poured over an a plathora of publications, speeches, and articles by such anti-Capitalist communications^{groups} as the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) based in Prague,² I have become increasingly convinced that what is being passed off as an indigenous Third World concern is being carefully orchestrated by Marxist ideologues and communications strategists.

If I had time I would like to substantiate this growing certainty on my part by analyzing with you much of the Marxist-Leninist material which we are all seeing, comparing actual phrasing in Communist rhetoric with that of UNESCO publications and resolutions as they apply to these international issues I am dealing with today. I would like to show you also the close relationship between UNESCO and such organizations as the IOJ, the largest journalistic organization in the world. I would like to provide evidence--and it would not be difficult--that this Prague-based organization of Marxist persuasion has a much greater impact on UNESCO than does its counterpart in the Capitalist world--the IPI, based in London. I could also show that there are many--and they are increasing--cooperative ventures between UNESCO and IOJ--for example, the College of Solidarity in East Berlin, set up to train young journalists from the Third World.³

I will not go further into my reasons for considering the Third World a kind of "front"--however innocent some of these countries may be in many cases--for the Marxist ideology. I shall simply say that I am convinced, and invite you to do some investigating on your own. You may sense that I even feel that UNESCO itself has consciously or unconsciously offered itself as an anti-Western, anti-Capitalist, pro-Third World party in this controversy--however much its officials insist that they are neutral and are concerned with the entire membership of the UN. I simply invite you to follow carefully and critically the pronouncements of UNESCO vis-à-vis the "free flow" and "communication imperialism" issues, and see what conclusion you come to as to the organization's purported neutrality.

I.

Let me first take up the issue of the "free flow of information" which has been at the heart of the worldwide controversy. Then I shall say something about the indictment of the West for its "communication imperialism" and the Third World's campaign for a "decolonialization of information." And then, finally, I shall volunteer some of my ideas on how

divergent ethical perspectives impinge on all of this. In many ways this whole controversy can be looked upon as an ethical issue, for all parties to the controversy see themselves standing on solid moral ground, viewing the irresponsible and ethically suspect actions of their ideological adversaries. Different socio-political perspectives on international communication can--and usually do--boil down in the last analysis to ethical questions, all parties intent on justifying their positions. In fact, many of you will feel--by the time I have finished here--that this is exactly what I'm trying to do: justify the Western ethical perspective. Actually, I think I'm trying to explain it, rather than justify it, but often the two objectives are difficult to separate.

But before saying more about ethics per se, let me dig a little deeper into the "free flow of information" issue.

It is tempting to say that everyone knows what is meant by the phrase, that it is really quite simple and has a common international meaning. Such unanimity would be agreeable, but a moment's thought shows that such is not the case. I find that, even among my colleagues at the University of Missouri, there are differing meanings for the term "free flow of information"; so certainly there is little wonder that Marxists, Third Worlders, and Capitalists have divergent views of the term.

To begin with, we cannot agree on what we mean by "free"--or by "flow"--or by "information," each taken separately. The term "free" has a notorious and long history of ambiguity even withⁿ the same nation or culture. Certainly those of you familiar with the communication philosophy of Marxism-Leninism know how far the term "free" (as related to the press) can be from the way it is usually considered by American journalists. It is quite understandable to me that the USSR, for instance, should embrace the Marxist-Leninist meaning of "free," but it is rather strange and disconcerting that UNESCO--supposedly representing an international constituency--would embrace that same meaning. The word "flow" is similarly awkward.

The normal idea of flow (e.g., the flow of a river) is one-way. Applied to the collection and dissemination of information, we might still employ a one-way concept of movement. But now we often hear "flow" used as a two-way process--or even a more complex concept of "multi-flow." And, of course, "information," too, has several meanings that are vastly different.

A broadcaster considers information programs as news bulletins and news and current affairs. To the student of information theory, information is a non-redundant, non-noise, message that is efficiently transmitted and received. To some persons, information may be "factual," to others not necessarily

so. I hear occasionally that information does not have to be transmitted orally or ~~in writing~~^{in writing} that information may be "things-in-themselves," not symbolic representations. All of which confuses the meaning of the term greatly.

The term "information flow," then, indicates many processes and products. It can refer to the transmission of news (and that term is difficult, too), or it can refer to the making public of records from some bureaucracy; the changes on the stock market; the warning of a tornado; the data in an advertisement related to the sale of a house, or the marital problem of a film star.

That each country deals with these informational processes and products in a different way, according to its politics and national characteristics, is obvious. What information flows--and how freely--in any country is determined by its national attitudes, traditions and laws, and, of course, the country's degree of technological development. In other words, "information flow" is defined pragmatically in each country at any one time. This is why projecting such a concept as "free flow of information" to a world-wide forum is frustrating to a great degree, and perhaps even senseless. This is why it is questionable that UNESCO should take it upon itself to try to end this semantic problem by throwing its weight to the definition embraced by one of its constituent parties.

The Third World has a whole list of complaints against the Western press,⁴ but at present the main target seems to be what is referred to as the "free flow" of news across national boundaries. According to Third World critics, the Western news agencies--especially the AP and UPI--are disrupting this "flow" of news, are distorting the realities of the developing countries, and are basically presenting negative images of the Third World. The leaders of these developing countries, both politicians and communication specialists, recognize the great importance of mass communication, the potency of international information dissemination, and the impact of national images on the conduct of foreign relations. They are, understandably, sensitive to the kind of press treatment they receive. And, by and large, they feel they do not fare well in the Western press--especially in stories from the big news agencies.

So it is not surprising that individually, and through the international forum of UNESCO, these Third World nations are mounting an escalating campaign against Western journalism. They seek to eliminate the impediments they see blocking the "free flow" of information throughout the world. In other words, they want to see news flow as freely from the Third World to the Western countries as it flows from the West to the Third World. The big Western news agencies, they say, have a virtual monopoly on news dissemination and fail to provide the world with a realistic picture of what is really

happening in the Third World. Too biased, they say. Too heavy on negative news--poverty, illiteracy, riots, revolutions, massacres, the possibility of Cubans in Zaire and other African countries, floods, antics of national leaders, kidnappings, etc. They ask: What about the good things that are going on--bridge building, highway construction, new schools, speeches by national leaders, and the like? Why is it that the AP and UPI, and to a lesser degree Reuters and Agence France-Presse, so grossly neglect these favorable news stories? Perhaps, the Third Worlders suggest, the West needs to redefine "news" so as to present a more balanced and realistic picture of what is happening.

Beyond this definitional problem with "news," we often also hear that the quantity of Third World news is inadequate--that the Western news agencies simply do not provide the world with enough Third World news. I will have to say that very little research has been done on this contention, but a recent study by Wilbur Schramm and his students at Hong Kong's Chinese University does tend to refute this indictment of Western agencies. Dr. Schramm surveyed the news coverage of four Western international agencies and 16 Asian newspapers in early December, 1977, and found that the average daily wire output was about 100 Third World reports a day--and this was about four times as many items of non-local Third World news as the average daily in the sample survey carried. Schramm's

conclusion, which he reported at a Cairo conference⁵ in April 1978, was that there "is no shortage of wire news" and that the "flow of news through the wires is adequate for a varied service." Schramm's study and conclusions could be criticized on several scores, but it does at least show that Third World newspapers have a greater quantity of Third World news than they ever use. We need more such studies--and also we need studies of news content about the Third World appearing in the news media of the developed countries of the West.

I have talked with journalists in some twenty Third World countries in the past four or five years, and I am convinced that what they mean by "free flow" is really a balanced flow⁶-- which, of course, is certainly as semantically difficult a term as "free flow." Western newsmen, on the other hand, put the emphasis on the free flow, meaning basically no governmental restraint on the collection and dissemination of information--or at least very little restraint. Third World journalists, then, stress the flow--with the main part of this flow relating to a desired balance or equality in the news that moves among nations and parts of the world. They also seem to have some idea of balance as it pertains to positive and negative news.

This difference in concept is important. Western journalists, for example, have found many of the Third World nations to be highly restrictive and secretive societies whose leaders go to

great lengths to keep correspondents (and not only foreign ones) at arm's length. Sources in these countries are hard to reach; meetings are closed; leaders are touchy, and the record shows that in recent years foreign journalists have been threatened often with expulsion--and many have been expelled for reporting what in the West would be the most obvious kinds of news events. The Western journalists say that if there is a problem with news "flow" it largely rests with the controlled systems in which they are trying to report.

Third World spokesmen, of course, reject this Western perspective; they shift the emphasis from the internal restrictive problems of the nations to the Western news agencies and foreign correspondents who take every opportunity, their story goes, to malign and distort the Third World. So we are constantly told that Western reporters in the Third World are either biased or uninformed (or both), that they are too few, that they are bound by traditional Western news values, that they are blind to developmental concerns of the Third World, and that they are warped in their reporting by extreme anti-Communism and by their suspicions that the Third World generally is not really "non-aligned."

* * *

So, briefly, what the Third World seems to want from Western communication is this: (1) a kind of "balanced" flow of news throughout the world; (2) more thorough, incisive, and unbiased news coverage of their countries on a continuing basis, and (3) more emphasis on "good" or positive news of the Third World, including what has come to be called "development" news.

Let's look a moment at the first of these. I have often expressed the opinion in the Third World--and in so doing, not ingratiating myself with my hearers--that it is naive to expect the world to have a balanced flow of news and information. Information simply does not flow evenly--for example, as much news flowing from South America to Europe as from Europe to South America, or as much flowing from the Northern Mexican town of Saltillo to Mexico City as the other way around. Who can really talk of a "balance in news flow" in the real world? Why does the Third World keep asking for such a balance? One might as well ask why so much more news flows from New Delhi to Poona in India as flows from Poona to New Delhi. Indian communications specialists know very well the realities of news flow, but they continue to insist that the West can cause a balance in news flow throughout the world.

The Third World also wants Western journalism to be "unbiased" and to present news on a "continuing" basis, eliminating the piecemeal, sporadic nature of news coverage.

This is, of course, a worthy goal for any journalism, but it is unrealistic in practice. And, besides, it is strange that these same Third World critics who point out "bias" and "non-continuity" of reportage from the West, accept without comment or question the same things in their journalism. News about India written by Indian journalists for Indian newspapers is also biased; it is also sporadic and piecemeal. And, I might add, it is also predominantly negative and concerned very little with "developmental" aspects of Indian society.

I am not criticizing Indian journalism for this--don't get me wrong. News is always piecemeal and biased. In any society, the journalist (or a government official) selects what will be news and fashions it according to his subjective value system; this works within the United States and it works with news agency correspondents trying to get news out of Afghanistan, or Chad, or Indonesia. It is not simply a Western characteristic: it is a characteristic of news itself. So I think it is safe to say that since journalistic decisions are always strained through someone's subjectivity, that news is always "biased" in some way--to somebody--unfaithful to reality and manipulated by journalistic judgement.

Then there is the indictment of the Western news agencies for not presenting enough positive or "good" news of the Third World. Just what do the critics mean when they talk of not

enough news of the Third World? How much is enough, and who is to decide this quantity? We have already seen through Wilbur Schramm's recent study that the Third World newspapers get far more Third World news than they use. I have certainly noticed this in my travels within the Third World also, although my observations have not comprised any kind of systematic or scientific study. As long as the Western agencies are operating in a free-enterprise system (or at least from a free-enterprise base) and doing the collecting and transmitting, they are the ones who will make these quantitative (as well as qualitative) decisions. It is not reasonable for anyone to think otherwise, although it may be perfectly reasonable for someone to wish otherwise. The Third World may not agree with the agencies' determination of type and quantity of news, but until the developing countries have their own agencies they cannot really do very much about it.

Another indictment of Western agency news emanating from the Third World is that it is of a non-essential and "negative" character. This is probably one of the most valid or reasonable indictments made by the Third World. For certainly a large amount of Western news is non-essential and negative. And note that this can be said (and is said) of news flowing within Western countries themselves--not only of news coming from Third World countries. I have no statistics to back me up, but I would hazard the guess that probably 90-95% of "the news"

which I see, read, or listen to is "non-essential." I don't need it really. And, as for the charge that Western news is "negative," I certainly wouldn't want to seriously take issue with it. Of course, I do recognize that many news stories which I consider "positive" are considered as "negative" by others: for example, the news that the water supply in Tampa is contaminated, or that a hurricane is expected to arrive momentarily. Positive or negative news? You decide.

In all fairness, I must admit that the atypical, unusual, and often sensational nature of news is a very basic part of the West's definition of news. Therefore, it is completely natural for Western journalists to apply such a definition when collecting and sending news from a Third World country. While we are on this subject, I might add that I am not really surprised, when visiting newspaper offices or when reading newspapers in the developing countries, to find that Third World journalists/^{themselves} conform basically to the Western definition of news.

Well, enough of this. I cannot really justify Western definitions of news by saying that Third World editors and journalists also use them. Perhaps when these Third World nations intensify their own development of journalism and communications schools, departments and institutes⁷ and stop sending streams of students to American universities for their educations, this problem will diminish at least somewhat

and the Third World media will take on their own individual characteristics. At present, a very high percentage of Third World university graduates in communication have studied either in the West or in the Communist bloc nations; and those who haven't have probably used textbooks written by communications specialists from the First and Second worlds. Although a sizable portion of Third World students do remain in the United States and other Western countries after they have received their degrees in Communications or Journalism, there are many who return to their countries to teach or work in the mass media. Perhaps these returnees to the Third World will be creative or insightful enough to write textbooks and develop university programs which will help allay much of the present criticism of the West for imposing Western values on the communication systems of the developing nations.

II.

It is time to turn now to the issue of Western "information imperialism." We hear the term often. Dr. Herbert Schiller of the University of California, San Diego, has produced at least two books propounding this thesis--primarily indicting the United States for such "imperialism" in its message dissemination designed to impose American culture on the world.

Finland's President Urho Kekkonen has stated that "information imperialism" describes the state of mass information in the developing nations--implying, of course, that all mass communication in the Third World is imperialistically designed.

Peruvian journalist Germán Carnero Roque wrote back in 1976 in the French paper Le Monde Diplomatique these words:

"The Third World suffers from strong dependence, especially in the field of news and generally in the sphere of mass communication media, which in every way is comparable to dependence on the political and economic level."

Dr. Wolfgang Kleinwächter of the GDR, writing in the IOJ journal Democratic Journalist of Prague (#9,1977), pointed out that in the field of information the developing countries come up against

- a real information flood sweeping down from the capitals of advanced capitalist countries;
- campaigns of slander, defamation and misinformation which on many levels threatens the national and cultural identity;
- extensive backwardness and underdevelopment of national communication systems.

Dr. Kleinwächter contends that Capitalist communication firms have almost an absolute information monopoly in news in the Third World, and says that "this hail of western information material means that agencies of the developing countries are hard put to win a hearing." The East German professor holds out some hope for the developing countries, however, in the form of "cultural aid from the Socialist Countries," and he specifically cites educational help provided by East Germany to Third World journalists. At East Berlin's "College of Solidarity," he says, nearly 500 journalists from developing countries have earned their diplomas over the past fourteen years. This College, by the way, is run by the Union of Journalists of the GDR and the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) in Prague. And the East German professor further points out that this year (1978) a seminar will be held at this same College of Solidarity, with UNESCO participating, on questions of building national communication systems in the Third World. He cites these efforts, and others of the Socialist countries, as illustrative of what he calls "anti-imperialist actions in the information field" which are useful for "suppressing neo-colonialist practices."

All I can say to such frenetic endeavors is that it might be well for concerned Third World communications people to be very careful not to fall under one type of communications imperialism while trying to resist another.

It is strange that when Third Worlders talk of such "communication imperialism" they always see it coming from the Western capitalist nations and never from the Communist world. Listen. Here is another voice warning of this growing "problem." Ernesto Vera, IOJ Vice-President and General Secretary of the Union of Cuban Journalists, writing in the Democratic Journalist also (#2, '78), calls this communication colonization or imperialism a phenomenon that has grown during the last 15 years. He fills his article with such terms as "the colonization of information," "communication imperialism," "disequilibrium of information," "cultural imperialism," "homogenization of bourgeois culture on a world-wide scale," and the "imperialist penetration into the information sphere."

Señor Vera believes that things are bad and getting worse in this imperialistic Western battle for cultural domination. And he quotes Gunnar Naesselund, Asst. Deputy Director of UNESCO, as saying:

"The mass media have become so powerful and so predominant throughout the entire world that their impact on the targets, cultures and social institutions of the nations has begun to make itself felt ever increasingly as an undesirable interference."

Neither Señor Vera nor Deputy Director Naesselund has any complaint about the big media system of the Soviet Union--only about the capitalistic and imperialistic Western systems. The Cuban journalist was especially critical of the imperialist mass media of the West for worsening the situation, and he was quite appreciative of UNESCO and the Socialist world for their help in combatting this neo-colonialism. Following is a passage from Señor Vera's article which I think not only reflects the flavor of Communist rhetoric on this subject, but also gives a fairly clear indication of Third World feeling about this particular issue. It is interesting, also, to note that there is a great similarity between the following excerpt and the language of the Draft Declaration presented by UNESCO at the explosive and controversial Nairobi general conference in November, 1976. Here are some of Señor Vera's comments about communication

imperialism:

A problem of primary importance in the present-day world and one which is linked with the struggle for the decolonization of information is the role that the imperialist mass media must play in relation to the danger of a horrible universal nuclear confrontation and the inevitable responsibility that the states having control over these means must assume. While the existence of humanity depends on the imposing of peace and on the progress of détente toward its becoming irreversible, the freedom of the imperialist mass media to make war propaganda, and promote racial discrimination and hatred among the peoples constitutes a crime against this humanity. Therefore, the socialist community and the movement of non-aligned nations have expressed themselves very clearly in the United Nations, in UNESCO and at all international forums in favour of the establishment of norms that will prevent a senseless policy of psychological warfare as an element of support for the war-mongering monopolies and their instruments of mass dissemination in the sphere of international information, the imperialist transnationals.

One last quotation regarding the Third World's view of Western communication imperialism should be given. This one comes from a paper presented by the Iraqi delegation to the 3rd International Information Colloquy held in Baghdad in November, 1977:

Suffice it to say that news, newspapers and magazines received by the developing countries are mostly published in West Europe or North America. Despite the rise of national news agencies and the growth of some of them, and the existence of information in the socialist states, the important fact is that the western news agencies monopolize the greatest part of information communication in the developing countries.

--(Democratic Journalist,
#3, 1978)

After this short burst of concern and warning, the Iraqi delegation proceeds to tell how the impact of this "imperialist information" can be prevented. Here is the Iraqi solution:

"We should not permit imperialist terms or concepts to be used. Furthermore, we should adopt certain psychological and technical means to attract the reader, listener or viewer, taking into consideration the special conditions of each country."

Quite a simple and forthright defense against Western communication imperialism, I would say. Of course, it is not quite clear how the Third World countries would prevent

the Western news disseminators from using their terms and concepts. The obliteration or censorship on Western concepts: Now there is a typical authoritarian solution to problems! It comes as no real surprise to me that such a solution is forthcoming from a so-called "non-aligned" nation which is, in fact, aligned with the Communist world. (Iraq is about as non-aligned as Cuba, I would say.) As to the second suggestion in the above quote, I would simply say that "psychological and technical means" to attract the audience to the Third World's own messages would, indeed, be a help in diminishing the impact of Western messages. And, I might add that it would be interesting for communications scholars everywhere to study the nature of such psychological means that would be employed-- and, what would be even more interesting: to know more about the nature of the "certain technical means" which would be used to get the people of the Third World to change their communication habits. I only ^{wish} our Iraqi friends had gone into more of the specifics in their paper.

* * *

I don't feel I need dwell much longer on this "communication imperialism" matter. In my opinion it is typical Marxist-Leninist polemic exaggeration, designed to foster the image in the Third World of capitalism as imperialistic. It is another step in the attempt to make "capitalism" and "imperialism" synonymous.

Certainly I will not deny--for it is obvious--that Western news agencies and other communications enterprises supply the great majority of news messages around the world. But this is a far cry from "imperialism." One might just as well call the Mid-East Arabs "imperialistic" because they supply the bulk of oil to the world. We in the U.S., for example, want and need the oil, so we buy it. The Arabs are not forcing it upon us. The media managers in the Third World, likewise, want and need the Western supplied information--or think they do--so they buy it. We in the West are not forcing it upon them. Period.

What I have found interesting in my trips into the mass media environments of the Third World is that the Soviet Union, for example, supplies a fantastic amount of news and features to the editors and news directors of these developing countries. But not much of it is used, the Third World editors preferring the more far-ranging, factual, and newsworthy Western material. And these editors, by a strange coincidence, are the very ones who in the public forum of UNESCO, castigate the West for its "information imperialism." Evidently a country or news agency is imperialistic in the eyes of the Third World when it supplies information which the mass media of a country prefer over information supplied by another country.

III.

Now, at last we come to the ethics of the opposing positions. What is ethical and what isn't? Certainly there are divergent views on ethics in this ever-growing controversy. Marxists dinigrate the ethics of Western journalism constantly. The West, and especially the United States, is labeled unethical for its refusal to "balance" the news its transmits worldwide, for its insistence on quantity and not quality, for its playing up negative aspects of Third World countries, for its refusal to redefine news so as to make it more realistic and useful, for its emphasis on profits to wealthy media managers, and for its premise that a pluralism of news and views is healthy and helpful to the smooth-running of a country.

The Third World takes up these moral indictments. And it goes even further. It depicts Western journalists as unethical in their attempts to undermine "democratic" leaders like Idi Amin, in their stressing always the problems and friction of the Third World rather than its hopes and progress, in their constant prying into government business, in their flooding the Third World

with pro-Western and anti-Communist materials, in their over-concern with a few leaders instead of "the people" of the developing countries, in their focus on tendencies toward chaos instead of stability and nationalistic spirit in the Third World, and in their constant concern with reporting what will "sell" in the West rather than with what is actually going on in the Third World countries.

It seems to me that the Marxist world and the Third World are basing their ethical indictments of Western communications systems mainly on teleological theories. They are looking at consequences of Western communication activities, and seeing them as unfortunate and ultimately harmful to the people generally. And, more specifically, they are seeing the Western communication activities as having harmful consequences to the Third World. So, I think it safe to say that the Third World considers the West unethical because what the Western communication is doing is seen as contrary to the best interests of the Third World. What, then, would be ethical in the eyes of the Third World? Answer: Anything that the Third World would see as helpful or beneficial to the Third World.

The trouble, of course, with this variety of Utilitarian ethics is (1) that it is subjective on the part of Third Worlders as to what really constitutes "the greatest benefits to the Third World"; (2) that the Third World critics cannot

make "long term" predictions as to beneficial consequences of Western communication practices, and (3) there is no way at the present stage of development of Third World countries to compare the utilitarian benefits of their communication philosophy with that of the West.

What the Marxists and the Third Worlders are saying, really, is this: What we want to be done in communication practice is ethical; what you want to be done in communication practice is unethical unless it agrees with what we want to be done.

* * *

Now, what about the Western concept of ethics? It, too, is tied closely with the political philosophy of the particular countries involved. Since the West is largely libertarian in the sense of being suspicious of too much government power, it is quite natural that Western communication ethics would come down hard on the principle of media autonomy and pluralism. No communication policy can really be ethical, most Western communication specialists would say, if it is controlled by Government or if it aspires to the elimination of deviant voices. Of course, as you well know, this is certainly not the case in Marxist-Leninist communication theory which proposes a kind of paternalistic philosophy whereby, for the good of "the people" and for the sake of

eliminating class and social friction, the Party-State apparatus must (if acting ethically) exercise control over communication and see to it that pluralism or diversity is not present to disrupt the planned destiny of the socialist society. So, since this is contrary to the socio-political philosophy of the West, the West sees Communist communication practices as unethical.

Now, it seems to me that the Third World (certainly most of it) accepts the basic ethics of Marxism-Leninism as regards communication practices. The Third World is a paternalistic world--a world of autocratic leaders, a world of great illiteracy, a world of large pockets of poverty, a world of unstable social and political institutions. Therefore, according to Third World reasoning, there is a need for a carefully planned, controlled society--and this would include the communication system. So, again in the name of Utilitarianism, the Third World is assured of its ethical sanctity. And naturally it looks on any system which seems to pose a danger to its objectives and its philosophy as "unethical." One such system, say the Third Worlders, is the Western communication system; therefore, this communication system is logically unethical. Period.

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I have dwelt on the Utilitarianism of the Communist and Third Worlds. Now, I should say a little more about the underlying ethical philosophy of the West. This is, of course, very difficult to do since there is such a diversity among Western capitalistic (and quasi-capitalistic) countries, but I shall try.

Quite naturally, the West would generally consider the non-libertarian countries as unethical in their communications practices. But the question might be asked: From what base point or from what standards does the West come to such a conclusion?

Certainly, I would have to answer that there is a rather large grain of utilitarianism to be found in the Western ethical philosophy. For without a doubt, most Western theorists believe that, at least in the long run, great benefits will accrue to peoples living in autonomous and pluralistic communications systems. But Western ethics, influenced as it is by the Judeo-Christian religion and the formalistic philosophy of Immanuel Kant, goes far beyond this concern for consequences so popular with the Utilitarians. In other words, as pragmatic as the West is in many areas, it retains a tremendous reservoir of absolutism and faith in the area of ethics. Framing maxims and principles, and adhering to them out of a sense of duty: this is a very important part of Western ethics.

What I'm trying to say here is that the West, rightly or wrongly, has fastened upon some basic absolute principles--such as a faith in a "free marketplace of ideas" or "it is best for Governments to keep hands off the press"--and has sanctified these principles. When we in the West act in accord with them--or as much as possible in accord with them--then we are acting ethically. And, by and large, we are dedicated to these principles, and feel that the consequences generally have nothing (or little) to do with the ethics of the matter. It's the will or motive of the doer that makes an action ethical, not the consequences. It is the faithfulness with which the doer sticks by his ethical maxims that matters, and it is not necessarily the consequences which follow an action that determines communications morality. Even though this Kantian formalism in ethics is losing ground in the West, it is still very much with us and impinges on Western communications ethics.

So, we are left astride several ethical worlds as persons concerned with international and intercultural communication. We, at this conference and in the Western world generally, I think, are conscientiously trying to find ethical stances which will permit us to operate responsibly and to formulate theories which will open minds, stimulate international dialogue, and result in intellectual

and physical benefits everywhere. In this we are quite idealistic and certainly utilitarian in the Benthamite sense. It may well be true, however, that our media managers and corporate executives are not as ethically concerned or as idealistically inclined as we are here. I have been led to believe that many of them are, and I can only hope that others of them increasingly temper their realism with humanitarian and empathic considerations.

Turning again to the Communist World and the developing countries of the so-called Third World, I would like to offer another observation. My experience with these societies does not convince me that their communications scholars are as open, idealistic, and flexible as ours are in the West. It seems to me that their communications concept is more closely tied to their political ideology, and everything they say about communication philosophy must be compatible with the larger theory of society and government under which they live.

Many of you, with considerable experience abroad and long association with communications scholars from the Third World, ^{may} disagree with me about this. You probably think that mine is a simplistic observation, and you may well be right. However, I am convinced that American communicators, for example--especially in the academic and

perhaps even in the governmental areas--are far more critical and open in their appraisal of their own communication system than are their counterparts in the Communist and Third worlds. What I'm saying, I guess, is that I think Western communicators and scholars are actually trying to be flexible and open-minded in their approach to the world's communication problems; and in this I would consider them as more ethical than those in other parts of the world whose every statement and every practice is inexorably tied to a national ideology.

IV.

After all this rambling about in the swampland of semantics, ethics and ideology, what can we conclude? Certainly we can conclude that there is a basic difference between Third World and Western concepts of "free flow of information." The West stresses media freedom (or lack of government controls); the Third World stresses a balanced and unbiased flow to and from the Third World.

Also, I have suggested that a balanced flow of news in the world is an unrealistic expectation, and that internal restrictions on news in the Third World is an

important (and Western) explanation for a paucity of serious and vital news flowing to the West.

I have also taken issue with the popular indictment of the West as indulging in "communication imperialism." The term "imperialism" is much too strong and unfair. The Western communication agencies do not force their products on the Third World; they provide a wide variety of informational services, to be sure, and certainly are not shy in their merchandising efforts. But it seems presumptuous for the Third World to consider this practice as "imperialism" or "colonialization."

If national leaders and concerned editors of the Third World really see in Western communication output the grave danger to their cultures that we constantly hear from them, then by all means they should shut off the invidious flow for the good of their countries. If their communication actions would match their concerned rhetoric, I for one--and I'm sure many others in the West--would have far more respect for their cause.

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And finally, we can see why divergent views of ethics exist in international communication. Ethics relative to communication practices is so closely tied to political philosophy and basic social theory that it is really

unnecessary to talk of ethics as a separate phenomenon. We, in the West, feel we are ethical when we propagate-- or at least utilize--our free-ranging capitalistic communications systems for profit and public service. The Communists and the Third Worlders see themselves as also ethical as they propagate--or at least utilize their highly controlled communications systems for the development of their societies along more collectivistic lines. There is really no way, as I see it, to cause these divergent ethical and ideological pathways to converge. About all we can expect is that the basic ideological systems of the world will continue progressing each in its own way, espousing its own system of ethics-tied-to-ideology, defining its own terms to suit its ideology, and rhetorically slugging it out with those of differing views.

This is perhaps a pessimistic prediction, but I think it is a realistic one. At least it is optimistic in one sense--and that is that we who are interested in communication can hope for a rhetorical or propagandistic slugfest instead of a nuclear holocaust. As long as the battles are verbal, we can at least look forward to a future where we can have conferences like this one and we can relish the delights of rhetorical confrontation.

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1. The term "developing countries" is often used to describe the Third World; it is, of course, somewhat fuzzy and even unfair, for there are many kinds of development. All countries are developing--and all are underdeveloped in many areas. What is usually meant by calling the Third World "developing," I think, is that these nations are intent on developing technologically, industrially, and economically.
2. The IOJ serves as a mobilizer of opinion and a supporter of major Soviet policies and Marxist-Leninist ideology. It describes itself as a "nongovernmental organization" and thus holds "NGO consultative B" status in UNESCO and the United Nations Social and Economic Commission; indeed UNESCO has cosponsored many conferences and other activities organized by the IOJ. With information centers in Cairo and Paris--and another being set up in Peru--the IOJ teletypes journalistic advisories to affiliates far beyond Eastern Europe. The IOJ sees its principal task as the education and training of journalists, and it organizes seminars and colloquia and assists schools of journalism in many nations: East Germany, Bulgaria, Cuba, and several African states. It produces textbooks on journalism and publishes many publications, one of the chief journals being The Democratic Journalist. The Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the West and its mass media runs through all IOJ publications.
3. Collaboration between IOJ and UNESCO began in 1969 when the Prague organization of journalists was given consultative status by UNESCO. Since then, the two organizations have conducted many joint activities, particularly in the training of journalists.
4. Such terms as "West" and "western journalism" are used in this paper to refer to the capitalistic industrialized nations of Western Europe and North America; the journalism of this group of nations is contrasted to that of the Communist nations and to that of the Third World (developing, non-aligned, new) nations.

5. The Schramm study was based on news coverage by the four agencies--the AP, the UPI, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse--and 16 Asian newspapers in early Dec., 1977. Prof. Schramm presented the results of the study at the four-day conference in Cairo in April, 1978, attended by 80 delegates from 30 countries and two international organizations.
6. Third World spokesmen often speak of "balancing" the flow of information between developing and developed nations. Sometimes (especially in IOJ materials) the so-called "balanced" flow which the Third World desires is referred to as the "equilibrated flow" of information. Such a concept, of course, at least from the Western perspective, causes the concept of "free flow" to wither away. For it should be obvious to all those but the most closed-minded that somebody or some group has got to do the balancing or equilibrating of the news flow; and that, obviously, makes a mockery of the concept of free flow.
7. There are many indications that the Third World is seriously beginning to stress training of their own journalists and, as the following quote from a Rumanian journalism professor implies, this education is concerned with turning out not only "professionals" but also "militants." Speaking of his own faculty, Nestor Ignat writes:

"Generally speaking, our faculty does not attempt to train an 'academic' type of journalist, but on the contrary while devoting great attention to theoretical training as well as general and professional culture, it places particular emphasis on practical activities for it sees in the journalist not only a talented, well-trained professional--which is undoubtedly an indispensable condition--but also a devoted militant closely linked with the masses and with the realities of society, who is capable of explaining and persuading through the intermediary of the press, and who feels himself bound and is capable of participating directly in the realization of the great daily objectives of the edification of the new society." (The Democratic Journalist--Prague--#3, 1978, p. 4).